SEP 7 1982

Y 1.1/8:97-733

NOT ORIGINAL

97TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
2d Session } { No. 97-733

ORGANIC FARMING ACT OF 1982

AUGUST 12, 1982.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. DE LA GARZA, from the Committee on Agriculture, submitted the following

REPORT

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 5618]

COMPLETED

The Committee on Agriculture, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 5618), to require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a network of volunteers to assist in making available information and advice on organic agriculture for family farms and other agricultural enterprises, to establish pilot projects to carry out research and education activities involving organic farming, and to perform certain other functions relating to organic farming, with special emphasis on family farms, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Page 2, line 1, strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Organic Farming Act of 1982".

PURPOSE

SEC. 2. It is the purpose of this Act to facilitate and promote the sicentific investigation and understanding of methods of organic farming and to assist family farmers and other producers to use methods of organic farming to complement conventional chemical-intensive methods of farming. The purpose of this Act shall be achieved in a manner consistent with the family farms provisions of section 102 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, as amended by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

SEC. 3. (a) The Secretary shall recruit, select, and train volunteers who have expertise in organic farming to advise family farmers and other producers who wish to make a transition in whole or in part to organic farming methods.

89-006 O

(b) While performing activities authorized by this Act, a volunteer shall not be considered a Federal employee except for the purposes of sections 2671 through 2680 of title 28, United States Code (relating to tort claims), and chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code (relating to compensation for injury).

(c) The Secretary shall make available to volunteers, at local offices of the cooperative extension services office facilities, supplies, materials, and other related services which the Secretary deems appropriate to assist volunteers in performing activities authorized by this Act.

PILOT PROJECTS

SEC. 4. (a) The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish six pilot projects, taking into consideration the report and recommendations on organic farming, United States Department of Agriculture (July 1980), and giving particular emphasis to implications for the family farm—

(1) to develop and present scientific information on legume-based crop rotation, green manure crops, animal manures, municipal wastes, soil acidity and liming in relation to nutrient release, intercropping, the role of organic matter in soil productivity and erosion control, and non-chemical weed, disease, and insect control; and

(2) to investigate soil, crop, weed, disease, and insect management problems inherent in making the transition from conventional chemical-intensive methods of farming to methods of organic farming.

(b) The pilot projects established under subsection (a) shall be administered through agreements providing special research grants or other agreements with six land grant or other colleges and universities located in and representing different geographical regions of the United States.

(c) The pilot projects established under subsection (a) shall be planned and coordinated in conjunction with the Agricultural Research Service, or its successor agency, in the United States Department of Agriculture, and shall take full advantage of the expertise of the scientists of the Agricultural Research Service, or its successor agency, in the United States Department of Agriculture, working at or near the site of the pilot projects.

DUTIES OF SECRETARY WITH RESPECT TO ORGANIC FARMING

SEC. 5. The Secretary, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture who performs the duties necessary to carry out the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, shall—

(1) serve as a coordinator and consultant to landgrant or other colleges and universities in designing all pilot research and education projects adapted to serve specific regional organic farming needs;

(2) by January 1, 1984, make available to the public, through local offices of the cooperative extension services existing information on organic farming, such as that set forth under subsection (a) of section 4;

(3) make available to the public, through local offices of the cooperative extension services, information developed through implementation of the pilot projects established under section 4;

(4) obtain and maintain demographic information regarding producers engaged in organic farming;

(5) identify problems and needs of family farmers and other producers engaged in whole or in part in organic farming, with respect to information, support, and incentive programs related to organic farming;

(6) identify marketing and distribution problems and needs of producers engaged in whole or in part in organic farming who operate family farms, and

(7) identify public policy issues which relate to or affect organic farming.

REPORT TO CONGRESS

SEC. 6. Not later than January 31 of the calendar year following the end of a fiscal year, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress—

(1) a report on the volunteer program established under section 3 of this Act, and

(2) a report describing the activities and projects related to organic farming research and education, in which the Department of Agriculture participated in such fiscal year. This report shall include proposals for legislation and funding necessary to address the needs identified in the report.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 7. For purposes of this Act—

(1) the term "cooperative extension services" shall have the meaning given it in sections 1404(5) and 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977,

(2) the term "extension" shall have the meaning given it in section 1404 (7) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977,

(3) the term "land-grant colleges and universities" shall have the meaning given it in section 1404(10) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977,

(4) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture, and

(5) the term "organic farming" means a production system that avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. To the maximum extent feasible, organic farming systems rely upon crop rotation, crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes, mechanical cultivation, mineral-bearing rocks, and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and tilth, to supply plant nutrients, and to control insects, weeds and other pests.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 8. Section 1463(a) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3311(a)) is amended by inserting "and for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Organic Farming Act of 1982," immediately before "$505,000,000".

EFFECTIVE DATE

SEC. 9. This Act shall take effect October 1, 1983.

BRIEF EXPLANATION

H.R. 5618, the "Organic Farming Act of 1982", would require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a network of volunteers with expertise in organic farming, working through the local offices of the cooperative extension services, to make available data and technical information gathered by USDA and provide practical farming advice for family farmers and other producers interested in using methods of organic farming. It authorizes the use of agreements providing grant funds or other agreements with land grant or other colleges and universities to establish six pilot projects to carry out research and education activities involving organic farming, with particular emphasis on implications to the family farm.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

In July 1980, the United States Department of Agriculture released its 'Report and Recommendations on Organic Farming", a study outlining significant concerns about the existing U.S. agricultural production system. According to this report, major problems confronting farmers and our agricultural system include: (1) increasing costs and uncertain availability of energy and chemical fertilizers; (2) excessive soil erosion, loss of soil organic matter, and resultant decline in soil production and tilth; (3) degradation of the environment, including hazards to human and animal health from heavy pesticide use; and (4) demise of the family farm and localized marketing systems.

In order to counteract the impact of these problems, the USDA recommended implementing the following organizational changes and research programs:

(1) Appoint a permanent organic resources coordinator and establish a multidisciplinary advisory committee on organic agriculture to develop liaison between organic farmers, producer associations, and the Department.

(2) Develop informational materials for county extension offices and agents to assist them in providing services needed by organic farmers and farmers interested in utilizing organic techniques.

(3) Investigate organic farming systems using a holistic approach. Because current research and data are fragmentary and piecemeal, there is a need to examine the complex chemical and microbiological interactions that take place in organic farming systems, as well as their relationship to wast recycling, nutrient availability, soil consideration, crop protection, energy conservation and environmental quality.

(4) Determine the factors responsible for decreased crop yields during the transition from conventional (chemical) to organic farming systems.

(5) Determine the long-term effects on soil productivity from the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

(6) Determine the effectiveness of organic wastes for improving the efficiency of chemical fertilizers.

(7) Develop new and improved techniques for control of weeds, insects, and plant diseases using biological nonchemical methods.

Indications are that even a partial shift to low energy agricultural systems, including the use of more organic farming techniques, would alleviate many of these problems. However, many farmers lack information on alternative agricultural systems. At the hearings, agricultural scientists and researchers spoke of the need to increase the information base for both organic farming practices, and the problems inherent in making a transition from chemical based to organic methods. Farmers are understandably hesitant to make a transition because any change entails a certain amount of economic risk. This is especially true today, with the tremendous economic pressure facing most family farmers. There is a great need for practical demonstrations and proven research to help farmers make this transition to what promises to be a more efficient, economic, and sustainable form of agriculture.

The Committee believes that H.R. 5618, the "Organic Farming Act of 1982", is a major step towards the solution of these problems. It is intended to complement, not replace, the chemical-intensive methods utilized by the majority of American farmers today.

There is an urgent need to begin to experiment with, and develop and disseminate information on appropriate organic techniques that might be used by farmers within their entire farming methodology and use. Thus where these techniques could save money and costs to the farmers, and where such could help increase their yields, as well as help them to protect and conserve the soils and resources, then such methods should be used to strengthen our nation's agriculture.

H.R. 5618 would implement most of the major recommendations of

the Department of Agriculture. It would require the compilation and dissemination of existing data on organic agriculture. It would also establish a volunteer program through which experienced organic farmers would conduct seminars and otherwise provide practical advice to farmers seeking to utilize more organic techniques. These resources would be made available at local offices of the cooperative extension services.

The Act further establishes six pilot research projects at land grant or other colleges and universities throughout America. These programs would focus on improving organic farming techniques, and developing economically sound methods to help conventional farmers who want to increase their utilization of organic agricultural practices.

The pilot projects would be planned and coordinated in conjunction with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in order to take full advantage of the expertise of ARS scientists. However, the projects would not have to be carried out solely at the oclleges and universities. H.R. 5618 gives the Secretary flexibility to structure the research programs through agreements that would permit specific projects to be conducted at farms or facilities not directly associated with the colleges. This would allow the Secretary to insure that the various projects in each region will be carried out by researchers with appropriate etchnical expertise. The research results would also be made available through local extension offices.

Any funds needed to carry out the purposes of the Organic Farming Act may be appropriated from the existing agricultural research authorization under section 1463(a) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977. The total cost of the programs created by this bill is estimated to be approximately $2 million annually.

Section-by-Section Analysis

Section 1 cites the title of the Act as the "Organic Farming Act of 1982".

Section 2 states the purpose of the Act is to facilitate and promote scientific investigation and understanding of methods of organic farming and to assist family farmers and other producers to use methods of organic farming to complement conventional chemical-intensive methods of farming. It further requires that the purpose of the Act be achieved in a manner consistent with the family farms provisions of section 102 of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, as amended by the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981.

Section 3 provides as follows:

Subsection (a) requires the Secretary to recruit, select, and train volunteers who have expertise in organic farming to advise family farmers and other producers who wish to make a transition, in whole or in part, to organic farming methods.

Subsection (b) provides that the volunteers shall not be considered Federal employees except for purposes of tort claims and compensation for injury.

Subsection (c) directs the Secretary to make available to volunteers,

at local offices of the cooperative extension services, office facilities, supplies, materials, and other related services needed to assist the volunteers in carrying out their duties under the Act.

Section 4(a) directs the Secretary to establish six pilot projects, taking into consideration the contents and recommendations on organic farming contained in the July 1980 report of the United States Department of Agriculture, and that particular emphasis be given to implications for the family farm.

Clause (1) directs the Secretary to develop and present scientific information on legume-based crop rotation, green manure crops, animal manures, municipal wastes, soil acidity and liming in relation to nutrient release, intercropping, the role of organic matter in soil productivity and erosion control, and nonchemical weed, disease, and insect control.

Clause (2) directs the Secretary to investigate soil, crop, weed disease, and insect management problems inherent in making the transition from conventional chemical-intensive methods of farming to methods of organic farming.

Section 4(b) provides that the pilot projects shall be administered through agreements providing special research grants or other agreements with six land grant or other colleges and universities representing different geographical regions of the United States.

Section 4(c) directs that the six pilot projects established under subsection (a) shall be planned and coordinated in conjunction with the Agricultural Research Service of USDA in order to take full advantage of the expertise of the ARS scientists working at or near the site of the pilot projects.

Section 5 establishes the duties of the Secretary with respect to organic farming, acting through the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture who performs the duties necessary to carry out the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, to—

(1) serve as a coordinator and consultant to land grant or other colleges and universities in designing all pilot research and education projects adapted to serve specific regional organic farming needs;

(2) by January 1, 1984, make available to the public, through local offices of the cooperative extension services, existing information on organic farming, such as that set forth under section 4(a);

(3) make available to the public, through local offices of the cooperative extension services, information developed through implementation of the pilot projects established under section 4;

(4) obtain and maintain demographic information regarding producers engaged in organic farming;

(5) identify problems and needs of family farmers and other producers engaged, in whole or in part, in organic farming, with respect to information, support, and incentive programs related to organic farming;

(6) identify marketing and distribution problems and needs of producers engaged, in whole or in part, in organic farming who operate family farms; and

(7) identify public policy issues which relate to or affect organic farming.

Section 6 requires the Secretary of Agriculture to submit annually to the Congress a report on the volunteer program established under section 3 of the Act, and a report describing the activities and projects related to organic farming research and education in which USDA participated during that year, including proposals for legislation and funding necessary to address the needs identified in the report.

Section 7 defines terms used in the Act, as follows:

(1) "cooperative extension services" shall have the meaning given it in sections 1404(5) and 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977;

(2) "extension" shall have the meaning given it in section 1404(7) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977;

(3) "land-grant colleges and universities" shall have the meaning given it in section 1404(10) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977;

(4) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Agriculture; and

(5) "organic farming" means a production system that avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. To the maximum extent feasible, organic farming systems rely upon crop rotation, crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes, mechanical cultivation, mineral-bearing rocks, and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and tilth, to supply plant nutrients, and to control insects, weeds and other pests.

Section 8 amends section 1463(a) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, the authorization for appropriations for existing and certain new agricultural research programs, to include within that authorization the authorization for funding the provisions of the "Organic Farming Act of 1982".

Committee Consideration

A. HEARINGS

On June 10, the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy held hearings on H.R. 5618.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Weaver described the bill's background, stating that the increasingly complex and capital-intensive nature of modern farming has prompted many producers to consider alternative farming methods, in part, because of the skyrocketing costs of energy, petrochemically based fertilizers and pesticides. Also, he stressed a growing concern for soil erosion and nutrient depletion often associated with many conventional farming practices.

Mr. Weaver stated that we were past the health food phase in organic farming, and were now entering an era where the need to provide food at affordable costs without destroying the land and water base depended on using workable organic methods wherever appropriate. He added that H.R. 5618 was in response to the need for practical demonstrations and proven research to help clear the way for farmers who want to cut their costs and grow a better product.

He summarized the provisions of the bill as consisting of two basic

components: First, it would take advantage of existing research data as well as practical advice that can be provided by volunteers experienced in organic farming, requiring the Secretary of Agriculture to make such information available at local offices of the cooperative extension services; and second, it would establish six pilot research programs at land-grant universities focusing on improving organic farming techniques and developing economically sound methods to help conventional farmers utilize organic agricultural practices.

He noted, in particular, that H.R. 5618 would implement the major recommendations of the 1980 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) "Report and Recommendations on Organic Farming".

Representatives of the Department of Agriculture, testifying on behalf of the Administration, praised the specific features of H.R. 5618 but declined to recommend its enactment at this time because the authorization originally provided for in the bill might be inadequate and therefore require a major redirection in existing funding. The Department believed this would have an adverse effect on its current research and extension programs.

Nonetheless, the Administration witnesses pointed out that increasing numbers of strictly conventional farmers are expressing interest in how organic farming concepts and technologies might be incorporated into their operations as a way to lower costs. They further noted that, if implemented, H.R. 5618 would help farmers control erosion, mitigate the potentially adverse environmental effects of widespread fertilizer and pesticide use, and provide independence from uncertain supplies of petroleum, potassium and phosphorous, while simultaneously contributing to the enhancement of the American food supply.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) testified that its members, the vast majority of whom are conventional farmers, were concerned about soil and water conservation, and resource uses. In this regard, NACD supported both the research generation and information dissemination components of H.R. 5618 as a means of moving away from soil depleting agricultural methods and toward a more sustainable, regenerative form of production.

NACD also pointed to a distinction between privately funded research and publicly funded research. While conventional farming methods, products and procedures offer a multitude of commercial possibilities, and research on those is widely performed in the private community, organic techniques do not typically involve salable products, and, therefore, are not attractive for commercial research, NACD concluded that USDA's research priorities should be shifted to focus on areas where there is very little commercial sale possibility and where commercial interests logically are not going to enter.

Dr. Richard Harwood, director of the Rodale Research Center, a leading private research foundation for organic agricultural practices, testified that H.R. 5618 has potential for major impact on mainstream American and third world agriculture. Dr. Harwood told the Subcommittee that the domestic impact would be most strongly felt through substantial reductions in production cash inputs, significant improvements in control of soil erosion, and an increased diversity of farm enterprises which give the farm greater economic stability.

Two organic farmers—one a dairy farmer from New York, the other a beef, grain and vegetable farmer from Virginia—told the Subcommittee about their experiences in attempting to set up farms that did not rely on chemical fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides. Both farmers testified that there was virtually no information available on organic farming techniques when they were getting established, and that the situation was largely unchanged today.

The farmers also agreed that the research projects should not be strictly limited to the land grant colleges, and emphasized the importance of studying the whole agricultural system rather than conducting research in a piecemeal fashion.

Dr. Warren Sahs, a crop scientist and Assistant Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Nebraska, told the Subcommittee that more balance is needed in the USDA research and extension teaching programs in order to show younger farmers the alternatives that are available so that they can better decide which mix of farming practices would work best for them.

A representative from a company specializing in marketing organically grown products spoke about the steadily increasing consumer demand for more nutritious and higher quality fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products. He pointed out that while organic farming practices have already proven to be ecologically sound and economically viable, further research was needed and information as to the alternatives had to be made available to farmers.

The National Nutritional Foods Association endorsed H.R. 5618 as an excellent beginning in what they hoped would become a national effort to improve American agriculture through the incorporation of sound, productive organic farming methods. The Association cited, in particular, the lack of an adequate national distribution system for organically grown products, and the remarkable decline in American soil productivity over the past 40 years as examples of areas where the Organic Farming Act would make valuable contributions to American agriculture.

B. SUBCOMMITTEE MARKUP

On June 23, 1982, the Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy, convened in a business meeting for the purpose of marking up H.R. 5618, the "Organic Farming Act of 1982".

Mr. Weaver, Chairman of the Subcommittee, informed the members that he had introduced H.R. 5618 in February, along with 21 cosponsors, both Republicans as well as Democrats. After explaining the provisions of his bill, he noted that considerable support had been expressed for this legislation by the many witnesses testifying at the hearings held on June 10 by his Subcommittee.

Commenting further, Mr. Weaver stated that organic farmers, who for years have been handicapped by a lack of information about organic farming methods, praised the research and dissemination components of the bill and that many other farmers had written to offer their services in the volunteer program.

Mr. Weaver manifested there was a great need for practical demonstrations and proven research to help farmers make this transition to

what promises to be a more efficient, economic and sustainable form of agriculture.

He noted the opposition to the bill expressed by the United States Department of Agriculture and announced he would address some of their concerns by amendments he would offer.

Mr. Morrison offered some technical amendments and a substantive amendment relative to the purpose of the legislation, which amendments were duly considered and agreed to by voice vote.

Chairman Weaver offered a series of technical amendments which were duly considering and agreed to en bloc by voice vote. Mr. Weaver subsequently offered a group of substantive amendments, to wit: (1) that pilot projects make maximum use of the expertise and ongoing research projects of the Agricultural Research Service; (2) specifying that pilot projects be conducted at both land grant and non-land grant colleges and universities; (3) deleting the provision for reimbursement of travel expenses for volunteers; (4) defining organic farming; and (5) eliminating the need for a new funding authorization by otherwise amending section 1463(a)—Authorization for Appropriations for Existing and Certain New Agricultural Research Programs—of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977. These substantive amendments were explained, duly considered and adopted by voice vote.

Mr. Panetta moved to report H.R. 5618, as amended, to the full Committee, and the motion was agreed to by a voice vote.

C. FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

On July 28 and 29, 1982, the House Committee on Agriculture convened to mark up legislative changes to meet reconciliation requirements of the first congressional budget resolution of fiscal year 1983 and to consider, as well, miscellaneous bills reported by some of the Subcommittees. On July 29, 1982, Chairman de la Garza called on Mr. Weaver, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy, to report on H.R. 5618, the Organic Farming Act of 1982.

After moving that the Committee Print of H.R. 5618 be placed before the Committee, printed in the record and open for amendment, Mr. Weaver commented briefly on the purpose and need of the bill and explained its provisions (a detailed explanation of these provisions is found in the Section-by-Section Analysis of this report, to which reference is herein made.)

By way of anecdote, Mr. Weaver recalled a conversation with a dirt farmer who told a farming consultant he could not afford the expense of fertilizers but he could possibly use his consulting services if he could predict the exact time when aphids would attack his crops so he could then introduce ladybugs to exterminate them. Mr. Weaver pointed out that the farmer was practicing some techniques of organic farming without realizing it. Mr. Weaver further stated that combining some techniques of organic farming with traditional methods of farming could result in a considerable reduction of farming costs and even produce better crops. Mr. Weaver pointed out that the dissemination of information on techniques of organic farming, together with the planned pilot projects provided for in his bill, could do a great service to our nation's agricultural economy.

Mr. Weaver concluded that H.R. 5618 was an inexpensive bill that has broad long-term benefits and is widely supported by farmers and farm organizations around the country.

Various questions were raised and concerns expressed by Messrs. Skeen, Marlenee and Wampler and considerable discussion followed concerning the merits of the bill, the need for such legislation when compared to ongoing efforts and activities by the Agricultural Research Service, and the land-grant colleges, the absence of support by the Department of Agriculture, and the lack of an endorsement as to priority by the Users Advisory Board.

Mr. Daschle spoke in support of the bill and cited the strong statements of support expressed by the numerous witnesses appearing before the Subcommittee at the time of hearings on the bill.

Mr. Weaver responded to the issues raised and stressed the fact that ongoing efforts and activities of USDA on research in organic farming were on a low priority status, very weak efforts, at the most, thus the need for the bill to mandate greater focus and special attention to the field of organic farming.

Mr. Foley joined Mr. Bedell in expressing support for the bill, noting that a considerable portion of the farmer's production costs are expended in controlling various pests that affect their crops, and that if agricultural programs of this kind can lead to a new and better direction, it is fully consistent with the policy of the cooperative extension services and the policy of applied research, which has marked the success of American agriculture for the last 100 years.

Mr. Weaver then offered some technical amendments to section 6 stating that the Secretary's report to Congress be submitted not later than January 31 of the calendar year following the end of a fiscal year and to section 7 extending the definition of "cooperative extension services" to include the meaning given it in section 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977.

Mr. Foley then moved the previous question and H.R. 5618 was approved by voice vote in the presence of a quorum. A request for a division vote resulted in 16 ayes to 9 nays, and H.R. 5618, as amended, the Organic Farming Act of 1982, was ordered reported to the House with a recommendation that it do pass.

Administration Position

The Committee received the following communication of June 9, 1982, from Secretary Block concerning the Administration's views on the legislation. After receipt of the report, the bill was amended to include several of the recommended amendments of the Department.

Department of Agriculture,
Office of the Secretary,
Washington, D.C., July 9, 1982.

Hon. E (Kika) de la Garza,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Chairman: This is in response to your request for a report on H.R. 5618, "The Organic Farming Act of 1982."

While the Department is sympathetic to the objective of the legis-

lation which is to provide farming alternatives to producers, and especially family farmers through research and educational programs, we do not recommend enactment at this time.

Section 3 of the bill requires the Secretary to recruit, select and train volunteers to advise family farmers and other producers who wish to make a transition to organic farming methods. Such volunteers are not to be considered Federal employees except for purposes of the Federal Tort Claims Act and the Federal Employees Compensation Act. Further, the Secretary is authorized to reimburse certain expenses, including travel expenses, incurred by such volunteers incident to their provision of services. Section 3(d) of the bill provides that the Secretary shall provide the volunteers with appropriate office facilities, supplies, materials and other related services at the local offices of the "Cooperative Extension Service."

The term "Cooperative Extension Service," which is used throughout the bill and which in general usage refers to the combined programs and resources of the State cooperative extension services and the Federal Extension Service, is not defined in the bill. The term "cooperative extension services" is defined by section 7(1) of the bill to mean the organizations established at the land-grant colleges and universities under the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 341–349) and section 209(b) of the Act of October 26, 1974 (D.C. Code, sec. 31–1719(b)). (It should be noted that this definition does not include the extension programs of the 1890 land-grant institutions, which conduct extension work under the provisions of section 1444 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Training Policy Act of 1977, as amended).

Thus, it is unclear but it appears that the intent is for the volunteer staff to work out of the local offices of the "cooperative extension services." Since the "cooperative extension services" are organizational units of the 1862 land-grant colleges and the University of the District of Columbia, the bill leaves doubt as to the Secretary's authority to furnish local office space through them; and the means by which the total of $5 million authorized to be appropriated for the fiscal years 1984 through 1988 could be utilized to pay the costs of the volunteer program. That is, it is unclear whether the program is to be administered by the awarding of grants to the "cooperative extension services" for the costs of recruiting, selecting, and training volunteers and other program costs; or whether some other relationship is contemplated.

If funds are allocated to the states for this purpose and assuming the volunteer staff will be under the direction of the CES Directors, it is apparent that the recruitment and training of such a volunteer force, given the diffuse nature of the information, would require that a commitment be made by CES Directors, using appropriated funds under H.R. 5618, to establish positions to give leadership in the compilation of applicable data and the development of educational programs to train said volunteers. Volunteer staff could be developed along the pattern of the "Master Gardener" program, but with fewer volunteers. Considerable time would be required to develop the volunteer staff. It should not be expected to be functional within the first one or two years after funding is made available. Since H.R. 5618 authorizes an appropriation of not more than a total of $5,000,000 for fiscal years 1984–1988 for activities carried out under section 3, it seems advisable that the volunteer program be developed in the States in which the pilot projects required by section 4 are to be established.

Section 4 of the bill requires the Secretary to establish six pilot research and education projects on organic farming to be carried out through agreements with six land-grant colleges and universities (including 1862 and 1890 institutions as well as Tuskegee Institute) in different geographic regions of the United States. For the fiscal years 1984 through 1988, there is authorized to be appropriated $250,000 each year for each project. It is assumed that these projects are to be funded under grants or cooperative agreements, but the intent of the bill is unclear. From a scientific standpoint, it would seem the language of section 4(a)(1) (page 3, line 2) should include a reference to disease control also.

Sections 5 and 6 of the bill require the Secretary to coordinate all pilot projects; make available to the public through the "Cooperative Extension Service" by January 1, 1984, all existing information on organic farming; make available to the public through the "Cooperative Extension Service" information developed through the pilot projects; obtain and maintain demographic information regarding producers engaged in organic farming; identify marketing and distribution problems of family farmers engaged in organic farming; identify policy issues relating to organic farming; and to report annually to the Congress on activities related to organic farming undertaken.

The report to the Congress required by section 6 is due at the end of the calendar year in which the fiscal year ends. Since research for the current year will not be finished until October-November, depending on the length of the growing season, then analized at each institution and submitted to USDA for an overall report, a due date of January 31 or February 28 would appear more workable. Additionally, regarding research results, there would probably be little to report during the first year or two of the program because much of the research specified in the bill is the type that would take several years of field plot work before much progress is achieved.

For the fiscal years 1984 through 1988, the bill authorizes $400,000 to be appropriated each year to carry out sections 4 and 5. (It is assumed that the reference in section 8(c) of the bill to "section 4 and section 5" should read "section 5 and section 6").

To effectively implement the features of H.R. 5618 would require, as a minimum the full authorizations provided for in the bill and could require major redirections of funding which would have an adverse effect on the Department's current research and extension programs. At a time of budget stringency, we must exercise management restraint in initiating new or expanding current activities. The Department has several ongoing programs that relate to the needs of organic systems. For example, the effects of nitrogen cycling and utilization on crop production, the use of municipal organic wastes on croplands, the effects of soil fertility and soil tilth on the production of economic crops, the use of animal manures as a source of plant nutrients, the development of pest resistant plants, biological pest control techniques, and the effects of organic matter on the growth and survival of soil borne plant pathogens.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

JOHN R. BLOCK, *Secretary.*

Cost Estimate

When the Committee ordered this bill reported, a cost estimate was requested from the Congressional Budget Office; however, at the time of filing this report, the CBO estimate was not available. Based on information furnished the Committee and USDA's report on the bill, it is estimated that the cost of this legislation will average $2 million annually.

Inflationary Impact Statement

Pursuant to clause 2(l) (4) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee estimates that enactment of H.R. 5618, as amended, will have no inflationary impact on the national economy.

Oversight Statement

No summary of oversight findings and recommendations made by the Committee on Government Operations under clause 2(b)((2) of Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives was available to the Committee with reference to the subject matter specifically addressed by H.R. 5618, as amended.

No specific oversight activities other than the hearings detailed in this report were conducted by the Committee within the definition of clause 2(b) (1) of Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

Changes in Existing Law

In compliance with clause 3 of Rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977

* * * * * * *

Subtitle K—Funding and Miscellaneous Provisions

AUTHORIZATION FOR APPROPRIATIONS FOR EXISTING AND CERTAIN NEW AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Sec. 1463. (a) Notwithstanding any authorization for appropriations for agricultural research in any Act enacted prior to the date of enactment of this title, there are hereby authorized to be appropriated for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this title, except subtitle H and sections 1416, 1417, 1419, 1420, and the competitive grants program provided for in section 1414, and except that the authorization for moneys provided under the Act of March 2, 1887 (24 Stat. 440–442, as amended: 7 U.S.C. 361a–361i), is excluded and is provided for in subsection (b) of this section, *and for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Organic Farm Act of 1982*, $505,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1978, $575,000,000 for the fiscal year

ending September 30, 1979, $645,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1980, $715,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1981, $780,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1982, $780,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1983, $835,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1984, and $890,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1985, and not in excess of such sums as may after the date of enactment of this title be authorized by law for any subsequent fiscal year.

(b) Notwithstanding any authorization for appropriations for agricultural research at State agricultural experiment stations in any Act enacted prior to the date of enactment of this title, there are hereby authorized to be appropriated for the purpose of conducting agricultural research at State agricultural experiment stations pursuant to the Act of March 2, 1887 (24 Stat. 440–442, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 361a–361i), $120,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1978, $145,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30. 1979, $170,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1980, $195,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1981, $220,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1982, $230,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1983, $240,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1984, and $250,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1985, and not in excess of such sums as may after the date of enactment of this title be authorized by law for any subsequent fiscal year.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law effective beginning October 1, 1983, not less than 25 per centum of the total funds appropriated to the Secretary in any fiscal year for the conduct of the cooperative research program provided for under the Act of March 2, 1887, commonly known as the Hatch Act (7 U.S.C. 361a et seq.); the cooperative forestry research program provided for under the Act of October 10, 1962, commonly known as the McIntire-Stennis Act (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.); the special and competitive grants programs provided for in sections 2(b) and 2(c) of the Act of August 4, 1965 (7 U.S.C. 450i); the animal health research program provided for under sections 1433 and 1434 of this title; the native latex research program provided for in the Native Latex Commercialization and Economic Development Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 178 et seq.); and the research provided for in the Native Latex Commercialization and Economic under the Agricultural Research heading or a successor heading, shall be appropriated for research at State agricultural experiment stations pursuant to the provision of the Act of March 2, 1887.

DISSENTING VIEWS OF HON. WILLIAM C. WAMPLER, HON. RON MARLENEE, HON. GEORGE HANSEN, HON. PAT ROBERTS, HON. BILL EMERSON, HON. JOE SKEEN, AND HON. SID MORRISON

Our opposition to H.R. 5618, the Organic Farming Act of 1982, comes not from the intent of the proposed legislation, but rather the allocation of scarce resources to the six research projects envisioned by the bill. H.R. 5618 would mandate that the Secretary of Agriculture establish six pilot projects in order to examine the economic and agricultural aspects of organic farming. The bill is estimated to cost two million dollars a year and these funds must be taken from current appropriated research dollars. In other words, these monies must come from ongoing research, a total of ten million dollars over the life of the bill. In addition, the Secretary must "recruit, select, and train volunteers who have expertise in organic farming to advise family farmers and other producers."

We feel the bill is premature. At this time scarce agricultural research funds should not be transferred or redirected into "organic" agricultural production methods. It would be of greater benefit to both the producer and the USDA to first examine the current status of organic farming and survey the field of past and ongoing research projects prior to mandating further studies. At the current time, USDA is in the process of conducting a comprehensive search of written materials from the public and private sectors concerning organic agriculture. This literature search will take approximately one year. Once these materials are collected and reviewed, it would be proper to go forward in some form in regard to research on less chemically intensive agriculture methods. In the meantime, the information thus collected should be distributed to farmers by the USDA in a clearinghouse function.

Until we know what research has been conducted in the past, it is not prudent to move foward with projects that will take funds away from current research activities. Our position does not indicate that we or the USDA are abandoning the farmers who intend to practice or are currently practicing organic farming techniques. In fact, just the opposite is true. The Agricultural Research Service of the USDA presently conducts numerous research activities which are beneficial to both the organic and conventional farmer. A few of the research areas are:

Research area:	*Amount*
Horticultural Crops, Insect Control	$8,584,000
Fie'd Crops—Insect Control	7,585,000
Basic Insect Control Technology	12,768,000
Bio-Control and Taxonomy	10,036,000
Disease and Nematode Control	9,766,000
Weed Control Technology	11,079,000
Tillage Practices	3,489,000
Water Use Efficiency	9,254,000
Soil Fertility	7,866,000

Just one example is the USDA program of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). This program is designed to bring into the United States insects that will attack and control noxious weeds and insect pests. Most of our nation's weeds and one-third of our plant pests are of for-

eign origin. One means of controlling these weeds and pests is through introducing species from their original country in order to attack the inadvertently introduced variety. In order to accomplish IPM activities, the USDA maintains research laboratories in Paris, Rome, Seoul, and Buenos Aires. These laboratories work to assure that the introduced species will not harm any crop or insect other than the one intended. This is an example of ongoing research that is beneficial to all farmers, but is not solely designated as "organic research" by the Department. Similar examples are improved genetic strains of plants and animals as well as soil erosion control.

The same can be said of ongoing research conducted in foreign countries and available for U.S. scientific review. Let us cite a few examples from our renewed agricultural trading partner, China. China is a world leader in green-manuring and has the highest cropping index in the world, practicing both intercropping and multiple cropping. These are practices which are of direct benefit to organic crop production. We can, and should, take advantage of such advances in other countries prior to spending our scarce resources and time on "reinventing the wheel." The above USDA projects are not strictly separated into organic and non-organic farming, but benefit all who are engaged in agricultural production. We do not believe current USDA research projects should suffer at the hands of "organic research" projects the need for which has yet to be established.

We do not feel that the USDA is far enough down the road for Congress to mandate that precious research dollars and time be spent for "organic research." Ongoing activities, and literature searches, must go forward prior to mandating the establishment of six new pilot projects. During consideration of H.R. 5618, the Committee was not provided with enough information to determine if six projects were too many, or in fact necessary at all. We have better ways to spend our research dollars at this point in time. The USDA should become a clearinghouse of organic farming information instead of an agency of rediscovery. We are in support of data collection and distribution to farmers, we are not in favor of mandating six projects out of current funds when we are unaware of the research that has been completed in the past.

BILL WAMPLER.
GEORGE HANSEN.
SID MORRISON.
JOE SKEEN.
RON MARLENEE.
PAT ROBERTS.
BILL EMERSON.

○